

A BRIEF REVIEW OF IPSATIVE MEASURES IN PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

The term ipsative in relationship with psychological instruments denotes assessment measures in which respondents compare two or more desirable options and pick the one that is most preferred or rank order these options according to certain rules; this is also known as a "forced choice" format. The greatest virtues of ipsative measures may be their ability to overcome the social acceptability biases of an instrument and compare ones strengths and weaknesses against each other. However, ipsative scores cannot be interpreted according to the classical test model which underlies nearly all normative questionnaires. The basic classical test model is not definable where random error variance cannot exist, as is the case in ipsative tests. The solutions to these problems are the recent developments in item response theory modeling of the psychological process driving comparative decisions. This modeling enabled the development of scoring protocols that are suitable for use with forced-choice data

Keywords: ipsative data; response bias; classical test theory; item response theory

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